

awakening. I am convinced we can't resolve all the problems in this country by passing another piece of legislation or throwing another trillion dollars at a problem. We need the good hands of the Almighty God to guide us through these days, and we need a spiritual awakening. That certainly is my utmost prayer.

Mr. Speaker, I wish each of my colleagues continued success here in Congress and a Merry Christmas to each one.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. LAMB) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMB. Mr. Speaker, this is my last speech.

The first time that I walked in here, I looked all around the Chamber the way that new Members do, and it really struck me that there are only two paintings in here. They are right behind me now. One is of George Washington and the other is of General Lafayette.

I think what struck me is that neither man ever served in this House, but on that first day, I felt that they were looking right at me and saying, we have a message for you: Don't take this place for granted. Other people had to fight for us to be able to do what we do in here.

On that first day, I had no idea that within less than 3 years, the D.C. police and the Capitol Police would have to fight for us again right here, that hundreds of them would be injured, that some of them would give their lives just so that we can walk back in that night and do our job.

I saw a recent poll that showed that just 21 percent of Americans approve of the job that we do in here; 75 percent of Americans disapprove. And most of us know why that is. We have been in our Congressional districts during a government shutdown and after we fail to pass yet another bill that most Americans support, and also because the bad news about this place travels much farther and much faster than the good news ever does.

But I just keep thinking about how those officers fought for this place. They fought for us. And I think they would do it all over again if you asked them to.

We can take confidence in that fact. We can take confidence in the fact that this institution did its job on January 7, hours after being attacked on January 6. We can take confidence in the fact that since then our fellow Americans have continued to reject so many candidates around the country who are not committed to this democracy.

If I could only make one observation on my way out the door here, is that I think we all have to be confident about this institution and we should be more confident in ourselves.

Our failures are noticed more. We all know that. But our successes are real.

And we have to value those successes because they are a credit to people like Capitol Police Officer Brian Sicknick or to Representative John Lewis or to a young Air Force staff sergeant from my district named Dylan Elchin, people who sacrificed and shed blood for this democracy and for what it means.

The things that we have done in here and that you will continue to do next term reflect the greatness of these people. I keep thinking about these brown cardboard boxes of food that the Department of Agriculture put together during the pandemic. They rushed them to food banks, and I loaded a lot of these boxes into people's cars when I was back in my district.

These were honest and good people. In their trunks, these were people that had work boots and tools; they never thought they were going to need something from a food bank. But it was our votes that fed those people and gave them help in their hour of need.

I could go on and on about the things that we have done in this room that are so special. My staff knows I talk endlessly about the fact that our district was home to the first-ever civilian nuclear power plant, and its successor power plant was at risk when we came into office. It is now secure because of the bipartisan infrastructure bill and the Inflation Control Act; thousands and thousands of jobs, clean power that our region needs in investment and science.

I would talk about the teamsters and the miners and how we saved their pension if I had time.

How we rebuilt a bridge in Pittsburgh in less than 1 year because of Federal funds.

How the microchips and hydrogen that we have set aside money for are themselves an expression of so much confidence in our future in this country.

My time is up, so I will just say that I don't want to deny that we have our problems in this country, we definitely do, but I have only been here for 4 years, and it is obvious to me that we have everything we need to be successful. For an Irish guy, that is a very emotional thought, but I have seen it.

When I was a kid, I had this plaque that my grandmother gave me that said the words of St. Paul, which were that we have a responsibility to stir into flame all the gifts that God has given us.

God has given this country so many incredible gifts. I just think we have to be worthy of that. We have to honor our inheritance; and on our best days, for the last 4½ years, we have done that. It has been the honor of my life to do that.

Mr. Speaker, to all my colleagues, I just say that I am confident in you. I know what you all are capable of and what this institution is capable of.

To my constituents, I say thank you. It has been a tremendous privilege to be here in your name.

VA'S PACT ACT WEEK OF ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the VA's PACT Act Week of Action. Since 9/11, nearly 3.5 million Americans have been exposed to burn pits and other dangerous substances during their time in military service.

It is critically important that they receive the care that they need before it is too late.

This week, we are raising awareness about the health benefits available to them as a result of the PACT Act being signed into law.

Southern Illinois veterans and their families can attend an event with the Marion VA tomorrow, Thursday, December 15, to learn about the care and benefits available to them, including toxic exposure screening, healthcare, enrollment benefits, and claims assistance. It will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. Central Time, at John A. Logan College in Carterville.

Similar events will be hosted all over the region and all over the country, as well.

Now, the veterans need to know you can find out more information at VA.gov/PACT or by calling 1-800-698-2411.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage any and all of our veterans who would be eligible for this care to be proactive in getting the help that they need.

RECOGNIZING MARIA TRIPPLAAR

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I also rise today to celebrate the service of one of my staffers on the VA committee.

Mrs. Maria Tripplaar has been my staff director, counsel, and friend for the last 5 years as we have worked to deliver on the promises that we have made to our veterans.

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Through her counsel and leadership, we have achieved landmark legislative wins for veterans, their families, and their survivors, particularly the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act, the Isakson and Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act, the PACT Act, and so many other notable and worthwhile laws.

All the while, she was raising two young children and helping us do all of that.

Maria, thank you for your dedication to America's veterans and the success of our committee. We wish you well as you move to the next chapter of your life.

FAREWELL TO CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LOWENTHAL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, just over 30 years ago, I made the decision

to run for the Long Beach City Council because I felt that my councilmember really didn't listen to the constituents and to my neighbors and myself.

This journey of public service has taken me from the Long Beach City Hall to the California State Capitol and now to our Nation's Capitol for the last 10 years.

When I began this journey, I did so with a commitment to listen to my community and to use all of my abilities to help make my constituents' lives better.

Over the years, with the help of my family, my colleagues, especially with the help of my staff, and, yes, my constituents themselves, I hope and believe that I have met that commitment. For this help, I will always be grateful.

Their help has led me to be a champion for the environment, to promote conservation of our wildlife and natural spaces, to clean up our ports and maritime industry, to address the growing plastic pollution and climate crisis, and to promote clean energy.

For my constituents, I have remained a dedicated advocate for human rights, introducing the International Human Rights Defense Act, securing the release of numerous prisoners of conscience and also Americans who have been detained unjustly abroad, and serving as a critical voice for the Vietnamese and Cambodian communities across our Nation, all while working to hold corrupt and autocratic elites abroad accountable for their actions.

My constituents have demanded a better future, and in their name, I have championed a strong and sustainable freight infrastructure network with the National Multimodal Freight Network Improvement Act and key provisions in the bipartisan infrastructure act, all critical issues, as we have seen in the wake of the supply chain crisis.

As a Jewish Member of Congress, I was proud to be a leading voice on the passage of H. Res. 326, a reaffirmation of our commitment as a Nation to a two-state solution and peace in the Middle East.

Throughout this journey, my constituents have remained the stars which have guided me. I have been deeply touched by their support over so many years, just as I am deeply honored by the trust and faith they have placed in me time and time again to represent them.

But as I said while announcing my retirement a year ago, just as every journey has a beginning, so does it have an end, and it is now time to pass the baton.

During this journey, I have been blessed with having the pleasure of raising two fine sons, who have blessed me with four grandchildren, whom I adore. I now look forward to spending time with them and watching them grow and flourish into wonderful people like their parents.

It is also a chance for me and my wife, Debbie, who has been my rock

and partner throughout this journey, to even more deeply enjoy our lives together.

However, as Robert Frost wrote, there are miles to go before I sleep.

I believe deeply in the innate goodness of our Nation and our people. I have seen us live up to that potential so many times and, in doing so, move our Nation and the world forward, but progress must be earned. It remains up to each of us to continue that struggle.

While I am stepping away from the front lines of that struggle, I will continue to be at your side, fighting for what is right, for what is just, and for what makes us better as both a people and a Nation.

It has been a distinct honor and a true privilege to serve the people of California's 47th District during my time in Congress.

IN GRATITUDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, after 8 years of service, in gratitude for this body and the people of central New York who have entrusted me to represent them in Congress since 2015.

When I first ran for Congress, I left a job that I absolutely loved as a Federal prosecutor, trying cases involving organized crime, murder, political corruption, drug trafficking, and every manner of awful crime you can imagine.

As a prosecutor, politics never mattered to me. I worked alongside public servants every day who sought to bring justice to victims of crime. We were united in our mission to make our community a better place. I brought this similar approach to Congress, and I dare say it has worked.

I am proud of the work we have done over the past 8 years—and when I say “we,” I am talking about myself, my staff, and my colleagues—to solve serious problems and unite people across this great land.

I focused on unifying issues, and I regularly introduced bills with Democratic cosponsors. In fact, almost every bill I introduced, I would not introduce until I had a Democratic lead on that bill.

I broke with my own party time and again when it was in the best interests of central New York and America. I remained an active member of the Problem Solvers Caucus, and I am proud to have led and grown the Republican Governance Group to become a very powerful and moderate voice in the Republican Party.

I am proud today to give this speech while some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying goodbye, as well. We did a lot of good things together, and I am very proud of them, and I am proud to call them my friends.

I am proud of this approach to governing, and I am honored to have con-

sistently ranked among the most bipartisan and effective Members in all of Congress. That is not me ranking it or my friends; that is an independent group. It yielded the passage of nearly 100 bills in my name and the enactment of laws by Presidents from both parties.

Most importantly, I was able to work across party lines time and again to deliver results for central New York. We delivered a bipartisan infrastructure package and secured historic investments for domestic semiconductor manufacturing that has now brought a manufacturer to central New York that is going to invest \$100 billion in central New York. Stunning.

We lowered taxes for the middle class. We began work on addressing the opioid epidemic and mental health crisis. We worked on efforts to strengthen cybersecurity, improve airport and transportation security, and protect our homeland.

In the past year alone, we brought home nearly \$9 million in funding for initiatives that will improve the quality of life across our district.

Of course, this has not been a one-man operation. I could not have had these successes without a tremendous amount of support. I have been blessed with family, friends, health, and the most loving and patient wife you could possibly imagine, Robin.

I have been supported by an incredible staff, some of whom I see here today. I am so glad they are here. I have been supported by staff members who faithfully served central New York and diligently worked on the House Homeland Security Committee, as well, to make our Nation safer.

Four times, my constituents in Onondaga, Cayuga, Wayne, and Oswego Counties elected me to be their voice in Congress, and they have consistently provided me with valuable and, oftentimes, very frank input. They have guided my decisions, to say the least.

These constituents are not just Republicans, and they are not just Democrats, and they are not just Independents, but they are all of my constituents. I profoundly understood that. I am eternally grateful for their input.

Serving central New York has been an honor that I can't possibly tell you.

Finally, as my time in Congress comes to an end, I urge my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to consider the impact of working across the aisle as they seek to address the many challenges ahead.

Throughout my 8 years in Congress, I have consistently drawn inspiration from the relationship between two diametrically opposed political giants from the 1980s, Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill. They were able to compromise and make progress on issues today that seem unfathomable: tax reform, tax cuts, immigration reform, and Social Security reform. Imagine trying to do that today in this divided House.

They did it not because of personal or political gain. They did it because of